

This Grace Was Given Us

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Preacher: Joshua Winters

[0 : 00] All right, well we are going to go now into our time in the Word and our hope and our prayer is that our hearts will be focused for the Lord's table as we come to remember Christ and what He has done for us this morning.

So there are some clipboards at the back for kids. Now's a great time to grab them if you want to do the activity sheets that are on there. We are going to be looking at Paul's second letter to Timothy this morning.

If you have your Bible with you, you can open it up to 2 Timothy, but I'll also try to have the words on the screen as much as possible for us. Most of you probably know that Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ.

He wasn't one of the 12 apostles, but later after the events of the Gospels, as we read in the book of Acts, Jesus revealed Himself to this man whose name was Saul while he was on the road to Damascus and his name was changed to Paul.

He came to faith in Jesus and Jesus appointed him to be an apostle, a spokesperson on his behalf to the non-Jewish world.

[1 : 08] And while Paul was on his journeys spreading the news about Jesus, he came across a young man named Timothy. And Timothy was from the region of Galatia, which is in modern-day Turkey.

Timothy became a disciple of Jesus and later became a partner in ministry with Paul. And he helped Paul spread the news of Christ around the Mediterranean world.

At some point in their journeys together, Paul sends Timothy to the city of Ephesus, the ancient city of Ephesus, and stations him there where it seems Timothy served as a pastor or a leader in the church.

And so by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul came to write two letters to this man, this young man, Timothy. And both of those letters we have in our Bibles today.

And it's this second letter that we turn to today, 2 Timothy. It's thought that Paul wrote this letter to Timothy sometime after Acts chapter 28.

[2 : 10] And if you know the book of Acts, Acts 28 ends with Paul in prison in Rome. And tradition or history or both has it that Paul later came to be imprisoned a second time in Rome and wrote this letter to Timothy sometime before his death.

This is a letter of encouragement that Paul writes to Timothy. And this encouragement comes against the backdrop of suffering. Paul has suffered much for the name of Christ.

And we're not going to look at all the passages that tell us what he suffered. But it wasn't just scorn or ridicule. At this point in the story, there is widespread persecution of the church of Jesus Christ.

And even violence, even putting the followers of Jesus to death.

It's a very difficult time. And so Paul writes to encourage Timothy. There's a sense perhaps here in this letter that Timothy is tempted to give in to fear and to be silent.

[3 : 27] To stop preaching the good news of Jesus. And so Paul writes to encourage him to rekindle the gift of God that he has received.

To keep preaching, keep teaching, spreading the message of Jesus. Paul writes to encourage him, do not be ashamed of this message of Jesus, this testimony about Jesus.

He writes to encourage him to willingly share in the sufferings that come with making the good news of Jesus known. And it's here that Paul reminds Timothy of some of the goodness of that news.

He reminds Timothy that we have a gospel, a good news that's worth suffering for. And so this is what we want to look at this morning as we prepare our hearts for the Lord's table.

Let me read you Paul's words to Timothy from 2 Timothy chapter 1 verses 6 to 12. Paul says to him, He has saved us, he has saved us, he has saved us, and called us to a holy life.

[5 : 07] Not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus. Who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, says Paul. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame.

Because I know whom I have believed. And I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. These are sweet words.

Paul is essentially saying, Timothy, don't forget. We have a gospel, a good news that's worth suffering for. Let's consider some of what he says here, especially in verses 9 and 10.

[6 : 13] Paul reminds him in verse 9, He has saved us. We use that word saved a lot to refer to whether someone has come to believe in Jesus.

We'll ask the question, Is that person saved? Or we'll say, That person was saved a few years ago. And it might sound strange to outsiders, But we use this word for a reason.

This is God's word. For what he has done for us who believe in his son Jesus. He has saved us. Which of course begs the question, Saved us from what?

The Bible's answer to this, God's answer to this is that we are all sinners who stand guilty before God. We are all deserving of punishment because of that.

And the Bible tells us what the punishment or the penalty for our sins is. Death. And beyond that, Hell. And so there is need for us to be saved.

[7 : 21] To be rescued from that. And the good news, The gospel of Jesus, Is that God has done that for us. He has made a way for us to be saved.

He has made a way for us to be forgiven of our sins. And our guilt taken away and atoned for. And our final sentence changed from death and hell.

To life forever with God. Heaven. And this is a big deal.

Timothy, remember. God has saved us. Remember this good news. We were in dire need. He provided a way for us to be rescued from ultimate disaster.

Father. And there's more. Not only has he saved us, Paul says, He has saved us and called us to a holy life. Quite literally here, He has called us to a holy calling.

[8 : 28] Now there's some differences among the translations here. I put a couple of them up there on the screen for you. Some say with a holy calling. Some say to a holy calling.

Truth be told, in the original language, it could be either. But the native speakers of the language 2,000 years ago, they probably would have known exactly which it was, just by the context.

We're kind of left to guess a little bit here today. Is it that the calling itself is special, distinct, holy?

Or is it the life that the calling brings us into that's special, distinct, and holy? And I can't tell you the answer from this passage alone, but we do know from other places in the New Testament that both are true.

Both are truths that are taught in the Scriptures by God. Let's look at the first one. First, we are called with a holy calling, with a special calling.

[9 : 37] And I'll give two reasons. First, the calling is holy because God is holy. It's a special invitation, call from God because of who it comes from.

And second, the calling is special. It is holy because it is powerful and effectual. We'll look for a moment here at Romans 8, verse 28 to 30.

This is also Paul writing to the church at Rome. He says, And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called.

Those he called, he also justified. Those he justified, he also glorified. There is an unbreakable chain of logic here.

[10 : 47] All who are foreknown are also predestined. All who are predestined are then called. All who are called by God respond with faith and are justified.

They're made right with God. And all who are justified go on to be glorified someday when Christ returns. So it is a very special, holy calling.

First, because it's from a special and holy God. And second, because it seems to be a powerful and effectual calling such that those who receive this calling, they do respond.

They are saved. In that sense, it is special. It is set apart from the general invitation that God gives to all. So that covers the first possibility that God has called us with a holy calling and two reasons there.

But as I said, the second possibility is true as well. God also tells us in quite a few places that we have been called to a holy life. To a different life than we had before.

[11 : 55] We've been hearing a little bit about this in the Gospel of John as Jesus speaks to his disciples. In John 15, verse 19, he said to his disciples, I have chosen you out of the world to be different than them, to be set apart from them, to be holy.

In other passages, we see to live a holy life. And Paul will go on to urge Timothy in this very letter to live that distinct life, that holy life, filled with righteousness and love and faith and peace.

A life that matches the Jesus that we have believed in. That in 2 Timothy 2, verse 19 to 22. So God has saved us. He has called us both with a holy calling and to a holy calling.

And, says Paul, he has done this not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace.

This being saved, this being called by God, it's not something God did to us because we had been such good people or because we had done enough good works.

[13 : 13] No, says Paul. He saved us and called us because of his own purpose and grace. Do you hear this?

God has his own purpose for saving and calling sinners like you and me to himself. He has his own purpose, his own reason.

It's not because he's obligated to save us because of how we've somehow met a certain requirement, done enough good works.

No, the purpose, the reason God saves and calls us is not found in us. It's found in him. Paul says he does it according to his own grace.

God is a good, gracious, generous God. he is truly benevolent and it's out of his own goodness, his generosity, his giving nature that he has purposed to save us and to call us to himself.

[14 : 26] Perhaps another way to say it is this, that God has decided to save us and call us reflects much more on him and who he is than on us and who we are and have been.

That's humbling, isn't it? In fact, this is why the good news of Jesus is so wonderful because truthfully we are unworthy of God because of our sins, because of our corruption, our rebellion against him.

We don't deserve to be in a favorable relationship with him. But he is the kind of good and gracious God, compassionate, merciful God that he offers this saving, this salvation as a gift, a free gift.

And that is wonderful news because according to God's word, I mean, we could never do enough good to earn it, to get that right standing with God.

That's why we need to be saved. We need to be rescued. So God has saved us. He has called us both with a holy calling and to a holy calling.

[15 : 50] And, says Paul, he has done this not because of works we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. And he goes on, this grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

I'll be honest, I actually don't like that translation. Quite literally, the text reads, grace that was given us in Christ Jesus before times of eternity.

But that doesn't come through so well into our English language. So I understand what the translation that was just on screen is trying to get at.

Let me be philosophical for a moment here. This is not the scriptures talking, this is me talking. In my understanding, time does not have a beginning in the first place.

Time is no thing in itself. What is time? Isn't it just how we measure the sequence and succession and duration of happenings of things that occur? Think about this, if the earth didn't rotate, if it didn't orbit the sun, there would still be sequence and succession of events upon the earth.

[17 : 02] Never mind that life would probably cease to exist because we need the sun and all that regular stuff. We just find different ways to measure it. But I'm getting all philosophical now.

This is why I prefer other translations. The King James got it right 400 years ago, I think, when it says, before the world began.

That's what he means, isn't it? Before the world began. Or another good translation, the New American Standard Bible, this grace which was granted to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, from that time before our world was created, before time as we know it began and that chain of events in our world started to unfold.

Are you getting a sense of what Paul is saying here? This is a profound thing and it's something that God wants you to know and to understand. God's grace, his gift of salvation for sinners like you and me was given, meaning it was decided, it was planned, it was purposed long ago.

Before the world even came into being from all eternity in that vast infinite sequence of happenings before God had created the heavens and the earth, he knew what would happen on it.

[18:25] He knew what path we would choose. He knew that we would become corrupt and fall away and become guilty and already he had decided back then that he would do something to save and rescue us.

Which means that if you're a Christian today, if you are a born again believer in Jesus, a child of God, listen to this, you have been loved from all eternity by this God who created you.

You were loved so deeply before the universe as we know it even came to be. There was a purpose and a plan in place to save you.

A decision that was made to call you to be a special child of God. And again, it's not because of how good we have been or any things we have done or how awesome or how wonderful we would someday be.

No, it's because of how good and gracious God has always been. I love the words of the psalmists and David.

[19:44] Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His what? His mercy, his loving kindness, his love endures forever.

It's an everlasting love. He has saved us and called us to a holy life not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

There's a distinct moment in the story of our world when God's eternal love and grace touches down to earth and the plan to save us comes into motion and Paul tells us this has now happened with the appearing of Jesus our Savior.

Jesus himself is the grace of God that has now been revealed to humanity. This is the good news. This is the gospel. God's salvation has arrived.

[21:02] This gift that's free has come and it comes through the Messiah, the Christ, Jesus. Jesus. He's the Savior. He's the one who will accomplish our rescue.

And this is why we treasure Jesus so much. It's not just the story of some wise rabbi who lived 2,000 years ago and did some things.

It's the story of God's eternal grace and goodness breaking into our world through the coming of a very special son.

man, the son of man, the son of God. And here is what the Savior has done, says Paul. Look at this. Verse 10.

He has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light. Quite literally, he has abolished death.

[22:04] He has rendered it powerless. death. That great inevitable fate of every single person who has ever walked the earth. Death. That unbeatable demise that overtakes all of us.

Jesus has destroyed it. He has abolished it. He's broken its power. And, says Paul, he has brought two things to light.

Now, this is metaphorical language here, but it is beautiful. The sense of it is that there were two things that were lost to us in the darkness, meaning that we could no longer find them.

They were out of reach, out of sight. And both of these things really are closely related. One of them is life. We have a measure of life, but eventually we all die.

Human life in its fullness was not meant to be like that. That's not how we were made in the beginning. It was meant to go on. We were not created originally with defects whereby our bodies age and our parts begin to wear out and fail and then die.

[23 : 17] That came after we rebelled as the consequence for sin. And so life, like we used to have it, was lost to us. It was lost in the darkness.

beyond our ability to find it. And the second thing that Jesus has brought to light is immortality. There was once a time when we were immortal.

That doesn't mean eternal. Eternal means that always has been, always will be. Immortal just means you will never die.

We still had a beginning. We are not God, but immortal. We used to be immortal. There was a time when we would not die.

But as I said before, when we sinned against God, our immortality was lost. Death came. It was the punishment we deserved. And no matter how hard we tried, we could not find immortality again.

[24 : 23] It was lost to us. And so what has Jesus done? Paul says he has shone the light on life and on immortality.

He has helped us to see how we can have those things again. He has helped us to find what was lost to us. Or in the words of Jesus, so often used, he has shown us how to get eternal life.

There is, by the grace of God and by the kindness of God, a way to live forever. And Jesus has made the way by abolishing death and he shows the way through his words.

We're going to look at some of them. All of them from the gospel of John. John chapter 4 verses 13 to 14 says this. This is Jesus talking.

He says, everyone who drinks this water, meaning the water in the well, will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

[25 : 39] Or John chapter 5 verses 24 and 25. Jesus said this, very truly I tell you, whoever hears my words and believes him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

On another occasion, John chapter 6 verses 33, Jesus said this, for the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

Verse 35, then Jesus declared, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

And down a little further in verse 40, for my Father's will, said Jesus, is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life and I will raise them up at the last day.

[26 : 50] And down a little further, the same passage, verse 47, very truly, said Jesus, I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.

I am the bread of life, said Jesus. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven which anyone may eat and not die.

He said, I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world.

What was Jesus doing as he said all those things? He was, in the words of Paul, bringing light to life and immortality, showing the way for us to receive that.

And it comes through faith in Jesus. There is a way to cheat death, to beat death. And Jesus is saying that he is that way.

[28 : 00] Should we believe Jesus? What happened three days after he died? He rose up from the grave.

He came back to life. God's grace. And this is Jesus' own words, John 5, 21. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

This is the gospel. This is the good news of Jesus. We can be saved. We have been called with a special calling to a special life. God's grace.

It's a gift of God's grace. Not because of anything that we have done, but according to his own purpose and his own goodness. He planned and decided to send Jesus into the world before he had even made it.

And now that gift of grace has come and Jesus has broken the power of death and shown us the way to eternal life. life. And so if you haven't already done this, I want to urge you today to repent, to turn to God, and I want to encourage you to believe this good news.

[29 : 24] At the very center of this good news, this plan of salvation was something that needed to be done for us to be saved. Our sins needed to be atoned for.

A transaction needed to be made. It was Jesus' perfect, sinless life for ours. As we just read back in John 6, 50 to 51, I am the living bread, said Jesus, that came down from heaven.

Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. His life had to be offered.

His flesh, his body given as a sacrifice for ours. It was a great exchange. This is what happened when Jesus suffered and died on the cross.

The grace of God came to its fullest expression. The power of death over us was broken because Jesus took on himself the punishment that we deserve.

[30 : 34] Freeing us from that consequence and opening the way for us to enjoy life and immortality with God forever.

That's what we remember and celebrate when we come to this table. The bread that we partake of represents Jesus' body which was given for us to have life.

life and the cup represents the blood of Jesus which was poured out to atone for our sins. And so I want to encourage us now to take a few minutes to just pray silently.

Talk to God in the quiet of your heart. Talk to him about your own sins. God in the faith.

Ask for God to forgive you. If you haven't put your faith in Jesus, do it. If you have or if you do this morning, then I want to invite you to partake of this table, of the bread and the cup when it's served as we remember our Savior.

[31 : 50] So let's do that now. Let's just pray quietly and reflect. And after a few minutes of that, I'll have Rod and Dave come and serve us the bread and the cup.

If you don't want to participate, feel free to just put your hand up and signal that you don't wish to. And when we do pass it out, we'll wait until everyone has been served.

And then we'll eat and drink all together at the end. and even shall be punished for ■■, here to pure and second we'll keep hard on Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[34 : 18] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[36 : 48] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[39 : 18] Thank you. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.